

Raleigh Appearance Commission – Outdoor Seating Design Review Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
Wednesday, February 3, 2016

Members Present: Brian O’Haver, Brandy Thompson, Jamie Ferguson, Rolf Blizzard, Candice Andre, and Lauren Dickens, and Asa Fleming

Staff Present: Roberta Fox, Carter Pettibone, Dhanya Sandeep, and Martha Lobo

Brian O’Haver called the meeting to order at 3:02pm. He went over the agenda and stated this was the fourth of six planned meetings. He said there were four topics for the Commission to review as part of this working group. He also reviewed the items the committee had already discussed in previous meetings.

Review and Approval of Minutes

Members made comments on the draft minutes and asked Staff to make the appropriate revisions. Rolf Blizzard moved to approve the minutes as amended and was seconded by Candice Andre. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion

Roberta Fox went over a draft outline for the final report. She also clarified the procedure for presenting the group’s recommendations to City Council. The recommendations would be part of report to Council from the Commission. At that time Council may take action on the recommendations, may decide to send the item to a work session for further discussion, or may take some other action. Discussion followed regarding timing and the steps needed to submit the recommendations to Council. Roberta said staff would do more research into the timing and requirements for Council submittal, and see if the March 1st or 15th Council meetings were possible.

Roberta Fox began a presentation on Outdoor Furniture. She outlined the current language of the ordinance and the design issues, and then showed a photo survey of sample furniture. Brian O’Haver remarked that the photos showed the furniture used a variety of materials.

Roberta Fox then presented draft language based on previous Commission conversation.

Discussion followed regarding the definition and use of the terms “commercial grade” and “commercial use”.

Candice Andre asked if this language would be for the report or the ordinance itself. Roberta Fox said it would be used in the report. If Council agrees with the recommendations in the report, they would direct Staff to develop ordinance language. Discussion on the definition and classification of outdoor furniture followed. Staff and committee members reviewed language from ASTM standards for furniture.

Asa Fleming asked about including language for the storage of furniture, since that item was discussed at previous meetings. Discussion on stacking and storage of outdoor furniture followed. Roberta Fox suggested including the stacking/storing issue in the list of items that may require additional research. The list would be included in the final report to City Council.

Rolf Blizzard asked what types of businesses could apply for the outdoor seating permit. Roberta Fox said a variety of businesses could apply, though the ordinance was specifically for outdoor seating related to dining. Martha Lobo described what was covered by the ordinance. Dhanya Sandeep provided further clarification on outdoor seating as defined in the ordinance and who is eligible to apply. Martha Lobo noted that outdoor furniture outside of the seating ordinance requires a minor encroachment permit. She also listed what other types of encroachments were handled by the Private Use of Public Spaces regulations, including display of merchandise, street furniture, a-frame signs, and news racks.

Discussion followed regarding enforcement, definitions, materials, and scale for outdoor furniture.

Lauren Dickens suggested that language be included about consistency. Discussion followed regarding consistency.

Ken Yowell (attendee) said he would rather have a list of permitted furniture types along with the ability to have a process for approval of alternate types.

Candice Andre said something they should consider was to have these recommendations city-wide, or have separate recommendations for Fayetteville Street. She asked if Fayetteville Street was an historic district or has additional standards. Discussion followed regarding special consideration for Fayetteville Street.

Jamie Ferguson asked if the group thought that the language regarding 2-4 person tables should be under topic of space delineation. Discussion followed regarding if and where to place the language.

Rolf Blizzard said that he thought the committee should be comfortable with the concepts and develop a list of what items should be included in the recommended language. Staff typed a bullet point list of items as the Commission enumerated them.

Brian O'Haver said that the group should be thinking of how the City transitions to new standards once they are approved. He said there could be a grace period like there is for signage.

Attendees expressed their concerns that storage of the outdoor furniture during non-business hours is important. Brian O'Haver said he understood their concerns, but he wasn't sure it fit within the list of items the group was assembling. Discussion followed regarding storage and stacking of outdoor furniture.

Roberta Fox said the stacking issue was not part of the items assigned by City Council, but could be added to the list of items requiring additional research.

Discussion followed regarding maintenance and cleaning of outdoor furniture as well as the issues related to moving furniture for street cleaning.

Roberta Fox read the draft language for outdoor furniture developed from the discussion at the meeting, which was displayed on screen and reads as follows:

- Made for commercial use
- Identification of professional standard
- Complimentary to the architecture and the character of the area
- Movable

- Match and/or be compatible within a grouping
- All furniture should be maintained and cleaned regularly and kept in good repair
- Tablecloths should be brought indoors nightly and cleaned on a regular basis.
- Furniture may be left out for public use during non-business hours; stacking of furniture is discouraged (prohibited) and will require additional research

Roberta Fox reminded the Commission and attendees that this is draft language and is subject to review and editing of the full Appearance Commission before finalization. She stated that any draft language does not constitute a requirement for any establishment to alter from currently permitted operations.

Brian O'Haver said that the group would discuss design standards for stanchions, accessory furnishings, and occupancy signage.

Jamie Ferguson moved to adjourn and was seconded by Asa Thompson. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:50pm.